

CHAPTER 6

PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT



HOUSING

Overview

Darien continues to be primarily a single-family residential community. Preservation and enhancement of an attractive suburban living environment should be continued. In recent years, the Town has made efforts in providing a wide-range of housing, both affordable and market-rate. This has resulted from a number of policies and Regulations that have been adopted which allow such uses as condominiums, apartments on upper floors of buildings in downtown and in other zoning districts, assisted living facilities, and apartment complexes that include affordable units (see Appendix A6 for more information).

The Planning and Zoning Commission generally views a variety of housing options as an enhancement to Darien. The provision of various types of housing may allow opportunities for Darien residents who wish to “downsize”; may provide housing for those who want to rent; who need special kinds of housing; or who need housing assistance.

When considering any change to the Zoning Regulations, the Planning and Zoning Commission takes into account the short and long-term results on the community and the impact on existing neighborhoods as a result of the change.

Overall, Darien should continue to be a residential community, with primarily single-family residences. It should continue to have higher density housing located near transportation facilities such as train stations, and within walking distance to local shopping both in Noroton Heights and downtown Darien. A diversity of housing types should continue to be provided where appropriate for the specific property and the neighborhood in general.

Policies

Ensure that Darien continues to be mainly a residential community.

Ensure that all new housing fits within existing neighborhoods, and is appropriate for the specific property.

Provide for a variety of housing needs, including but not limited to, condominiums of varying sizes.

Preserve historic residences within the community when possible.

Recommendations

1. Consider expanding the current size restrictions for condominiums.
2. Continue to evaluate and consider amending the existing building coverage and height restrictions to maintain the character of the community.
3. Consider establishing regulations regarding impervious surfaces coverage restrictions to maintain the character of the community.
4. Continue to preserve historic residences within the community by working with the Historical Society and using available methods such as the National Register, Village Districts or Historic Districts when possible. (see Historic Resources Chapter for more information).
5. The Town should work with the Darien Housing Authority to ensure the viability and availability of affordable housing where and when possible. Also, consider the adoption of mechanisms which would facilitate the continued maintenance and operation of the Housing Authority's residential units.
6. Investigate the feasibility of allowing in-law/accessory apartments. Not only should the feasibility of allowing market rate in-law accessory apartments be investigated, but they should be considered to help the Town meet its affordable housing goals.
7. Develop incentives to encourage greater apartment construction in critical areas such as the CBD, Noroton Heights and adjacent areas.
8. Study legalization of illegal apartments in Darien.
9. Identify specific parcels that should be considered for affordable housing, as for instance the present library site on Leroy Avenue.
10. Adopt density incentives for congregate/cluster and condominium housing providing significant open space.